

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mark Pratt on 24 February 2011.

The application has been amended as follows: Please amend claims 44-46 as follows:

44. A content usage management system comprising:

a client apparatus that reproduces distributed content;

at least one distribution server; and

a database configured to store content to be distributed, the database [being] storing the content on a non-transitory computer-readable recording medium, wherein

said client apparatus includes a usage control data receiving unit operable to receive usage control data including a key used for reproduction of the distributed content from said at least one distribution server, and a reproduction unit operable to reproduce the distributed content using the usage control data, and

said at least one distribution server includes a confirmation unit operable to confirm whether or not the content distributed to said client apparatus is content having

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a limited number of authorized reproduction times indicated by the usage control data, and a usage control data distribution unit operable to:

(a) distribute the usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from said client apparatus, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including said client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to said plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is not limited.

45. A content usage management method comprising:

storing, in a database, content to be distributed, the database [being] storing the content on a non-transitory computer-readable recording medium;

confirming, at an at least one distribution server, whether or not the content distributed to a client apparatus that reproduces distributed content, is content having a limited number of authorized reproduction times indicated by the usage control data;

distributing, from the at least one distribution server, usage control data including a key used for reproduction of distributed content, by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from the client apparatus, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited, and

distributing, from the at least one distribution server, the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including the client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to the plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is not limited;

receiving, at the client apparatus, the usage control data from the at least one distribution server; and

reproducing the content at the client apparatus using the usage control data.

46. A distribution server which distributes usage control data to a client apparatus, the distribution server comprising:

a database configured to store content to be distributed, the database [being] storing the content on a non-transitory computer-readable recording medium;

a confirmation unit operable to confirm whether or not content distributed to said client apparatus is content having a limited number of authorized reproduction times indicated by the usage control data; and

a usage control data distribution unit operable to:

(a) distribute the usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from the client apparatus, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including the client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is

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distributed to the plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is not limited, wherein the usage control data is data for controlling usage of content in the client apparatus.

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art of record fails to disclose at least a usage control data distribution unit operable to: (a) distribute the usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from said client apparatus, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited, and (b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including said client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to said plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is not limited, in combination with the remaining limitations of the independent claims. Applicant arguments are persuasive.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

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3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to GREGORY G. TODD whose telephone number is (571)272-4011. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ario Etienne can be reached on (571)272-4001. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Gregory G Todd/
Examiner, Art Unit 2457